

# Good News

*From Getwell*

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Publishers of  
**THE SPIRITUAL SWORD**  
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Home of  
*The Spiritual Sword Lectureship*

Radio Program  
**The Truth in Love**  
WHBQ-AM 560 / FM 98.5  
Sundays, 8:00 a.m.

#### SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY ACTIVITY

##### SUNDAY

Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.  
Worship.....10:20 a.m.  
Worship.....5:00 p.m.

##### WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:00 p.m.

Volume LXIII

January 9, 2022

Number 2

## ON THE HOME FRONT

The congregation grieves the passing of our own Billy Collins. Billy was always willing to help out in any way he was able. Even toward the end of his life he continued his ushering duties, lectureship duties and made sure the bulletin got to the post office each week. He greeted people in the north foyer and was a fixture sitting on his deacon's bench.

Billy came from sound spiritual pedigree. His folks, Archie and Francis could always be called on to help out with any chore that needed doing.

We are very blessed with three outstanding secretaries, Annette Prater, Anita Shepherd, and Karen Wallace. Annette is the church secretary, Karen and Anita are the Spiritual Sword secretaries. Much of their work is done behind the scenes. They do their work well and do not ask for public accolades or attention. Only eternity will show the results of your labors.

Ron Wallace



# RON'S REMINDERS



## Faith Greater Than Israel's

Christians should strive for a great faith. An essential element of our Christian lives (Heb. 11:6), faith should be the foundation upon which we make every decision, speak every word, and entertain every thought. When considering the collective actions of the nation of Israel in the time of Christ, it is not difficult to see how the people lacked true, obedient faith (e.g., Acts 7:52; 1 Thess. 2:15). Modern Christians should note that failure and move past it with humility and a desire to please the Savior—like the centurion in Matthew 8:5–13 and Luke 7:1-10.

The centurion was found in the town of Capernaum after Jesus descended from the mountain where he had delivered perhaps his greatest body of teaching. Capernaum was a place of significance in the ministry of Jesus. There he fulfilled prophecy (Matt. 4: 13–16), taught things that astonished the people (Mark 1:21–28), and faced a lack of understanding (Matt. 17:24–27; John 6:22–27). This background is perhaps seen most clearly in Matthew 11:23 where Jesus specifically pronounced woes on the city: "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day" (NKJV). This was a place where signs had been performed, yet the people had not responded with faith and obedience.

What about the centurion's faith caused Christ to proclaim it greater than any he had found in Israel? In context, it seems any amount of faith in this town would give Jesus cause to rejoice. However, as the story unfolds, we see Jesus was willing to heal the man's servant after the first recognition that the Christ was capable of such healing. The words of the centurion that followed are what made Jesus marvel. The faith of the centurion differentiated itself in at least three major ways from the faith of the nation of Israel. These patterns can and should be followed by Christians even today!

### A READY FAITH

First, the faith of the centurion—a faith greater than Israel's—is ready. The centurion sent elders of the Jews to plead his case as soon as he heard about Jesus. Perhaps this was not the first time. Whatever the case, he acted at once with full belief that the solution to his problem was within reach. By contrast, Israel's faith was cold and unready. Romans 9:30–33 details how the nation "stumbled" at the Christ. Both in the city of Capernaum and throughout the region where Jesus taught, Israel too often did not recognize the Son of God standing before them. Today, we must ask ourselves whether our faith is ready—ready to run to Christ, acknowledge him as Lord, conform to his will, and live with obedience and love. If we are not full of ready faith, we will let Jesus slip by, and all our problems will remain unsolved. If we seize on the chance to strengthen our faith and hold to him, then our lives will be radically transformed.



## A FAITH FROM GOOD CHARACTER

Second, the centurion's faith—a faith greater than Israel's—is the natural extension of a good character. Luke 7:2-7 details what kind of person this centurion was. He cared deeply for someone who was merely his servant. This was not a man who wanted the powers of Jesus for his own benefit. He had love for the nation of Israel, going as far as building a new synagogue for the people. Finally, he had humility before Christ even though he was a man of authority. He was not too proud to come before the Lord with reverence: "I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof" (verse 6). Israel was a nation filled with corruption dating back hundreds of years. They despised the Word of God and persecuted the prophets who were sent to their aid. At the time of Christ, the religious leaders were filled with pride and corruption (Matt. 23). Even the common people of Capernaum were blind to the truth of the gospel. We must ask ourselves whether our faith is genuine, part of who we are, and a sincere reflection of our character. It cannot be a hypocritical faith that causes others to see a disconnect between our lives and the gospel of light. Rather, our faith must be seen in us as we live the Christian life in all aspects. We cannot afford to be like Israel!

## A FAITH BEYOND SIGHT

Third, the centurion's faith—a faith greater than Israel's— extends beyond sight. The nation historically found it difficult to keep the faith when God was out of their view. We read throughout Exodus, Numbers, and Judges of the many physical signs used to correct the people when they strayed from obedience. From the very beginning, when Moses was on Sinai and obscured from Aaron and the rest of the Israelites, they turned to a golden image they could see (Exod. 32). Yet, during this unfaithfulness, note what God was doing out of their sight! He was revealing the Law to his servant so that the people could enjoy a relationship with him. Later, in the wilderness, a physical serpent was erected by Moses for the nation to focus on so that they might be spared (Num. 21:4-9). Their faith was not strong enough to persist beyond what they could lay eyes on.

In a separate way, the centurion displayed faith that extended beyond what he could see when he sought Jesus from a distance. The centurion recognized Christ's power was great enough that physical closeness was unnecessary for his servant to be healed. Christians today have only heard of Jesus; we have not seen the great works the nation of Israel saw, nor have we had a personal encounter with the Lord. Do we act in the same way as the centurion? Do we reach out in faith that goes beyond our senses? We must have faith in who God is rather than what he looks like. He has not changed from who he was thousands of years ago, nor will he change in the future (Heb.13:7-8, Jas. 1:16-17). Faith greater than Israel's leads us to trust even when we are unable to lay eyes on the Savior (cf. 2 Cor. 5:7).

Faith greater than Israel's is the ready extension of a good character beyond our physical sight. These three elements were present in the life of the centurion and are vital to our Christian walks today. The faith the centurion displayed led to the outcome that had been the source of his coming to Jesus in the first place—his servant was healed. The centurion's faith was alive and working; as a consequence, God worked for him! May our faith be like that of the centurion. May we all be the possessors of a faith greater than Israel's and thereby become recipients of blessings greater than those Israel enjoyed. May it be said of every Christian by the Lord himself that their faith was "great"!